DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 339 571 RC 018 410

AUTHOR Bachus, Gordon S.
TITLE The Shifting Format of Administration in Small Schools: Participatory School Decision Making.
PUB DATE Oct 91
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Rural Education Association (83rd, Jackson, MS, October 10-14, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Decentralization; Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; *Participative Decision Making; *Rural Schools; *School Based Management; Small Schools; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

This study surveyed teacher's attitudes toward participatory decision making activity. The trend toward school-based management raises the question of whether or not teachers actually want to be involved in management of their schools. Sixty-seven teachers, from small schools taking graduate courses during the 1991 summer session at the Central Missouri State University, responded to the questionnaire. They were asked to indicate their level of interest in being involved in decision making activities associated with 15 selected duties typically performed by principals. Data were summarized in the categories of all teachers, elementary teachers, and secondary teachers. The findings suggest that teachers in small schools do want to participate in decision making. The majority of teachers indicated a desire to be involved in all activities on the questionnaire. Activities attracting the highest level of interest were those that relate to the teacher and the classroom. According to this study, teachers want to be most involved in decisions that affect discipline, curriculum, parents, expenditures, and class size. Responses were less strong in decisions addressing the selection and planning of professional development programming and in-service activities, policies effecting the teacher's schedules, procedures for evaluating lesson plans, evaluation of instruction, and teacher placement and duty assignments. (KS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED339571

THE SHIFTING FORMAT OF ADMINISTRATION IN SMALL SCHOOLS: PARTICIPATORY SCHOOL DECISION MAKING

by
Gordon S. Bachus

RC018410

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gordon S. Bachus

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

THE SHIFTING FORMAT OF ADMINISTRATION IN SMALL SCHOOLS: PARTICIPATORY SCHOOL DECISION MAKING

School-based management requires changes in administrative priorities, attitudes and method of doing business. A major demand will be for more information flowing from teachers. While school-based management or site-based management is not a new form of administration, it is a new concept for many. It is first a philosophy, then a paradigm of administrative leadership. A new paradigm. In this design there is a focus on quality education at the local school level and a genuine effort to empower teachers to be involved directly in the decision making process. Ownership of curriculum and the teaching and learning process becomes paramount. A shared leadership philosophy must be at the core of the program for the idea to become reality.

School-based management is being tried in many larger school districts throughout the nation. In fact a program of school-based decision-making must be fully implemented by the 1996-97 school year in Kentucky. This reform was mandated by the legislature of that state in 1990.(Van Meter, 1991) Of significant importance is to what degree is the concept being utilized in small rural schools. It may not be totally in error to suggest that the process at least to some degree, has been working in small rural schools for many years, in that there are many jobs to be done by a limited number of employees, consequently teachers are much more apt to be involved with decision making and leadership activities. Teachers are often more visible in the small schools than their counterparts in larger schools.

A serious question addresses whether or not teachers actually want to be involved in management of their school. Some view the concept as a new educational fad, that, like so many before, will have little impact on solving problems of individual teachers or help them do a better job. Indeed school-based management places new demands on teachers' and administrators' time. As the concept moves from a philosophy to action activity one thing is certain: training and preparation is a necessity.

Decentralizing a local education operation is not simple. Studies and published discussion of this action suggests that school administrators and school board members must share selective power and decision making processes with teachers, principals, parents and citizens. Decentralized decision making would funnel a maximum of (1) educational planning, (2) accountability, (3) some personnel management, (4) material resource allotment and

(5) policy making and budget allocation, to individual school sites. (Majkowski and Fleming, 1988).

Marburger(1985) suggested that teachers who are involved in decision making have a sense of ownership about the decision, which can lead to a positive attitude as well as a commitment to the final outcome. The theory is that teachers in a group, as opposed to one individual, frequently produce more creative ideas. (Powell, 1991).

Huddlestion, Claspell and Killion (1991) recommend that a move to participatory decision making be accomplished in four phases: readiness, experimentation, refinement through trial and error, and institutionalization of the process. Most helpful is their comment on the need to clarify the parameters of the process and understanding the following: what decisions will be shared, what groups of people will be involved and at what stage in the process, what time limits will be set for reaching decisions, how decisions will be made (i.e., majority vote, concensus) and who is responsible for carrying out the decisions.

School-based management can involve having several advisory boards in one building. Communication becomes a more serious responsibility in this type of administrataive format. Roles of employees change. Are teachers ready and willing to participate?

To gain some evidence on teacher's attitudes toward participatory decision making activity, a study was conducted a Central Missouri State University during the 1991 summer semester. Selected teachers taking graduate courses responded to a questionaire addressing participatory decision making and site-based management. For the purposes of this study 67 responses from faculty in smaller school districts (600 or fewer students enrolled in K through 12) were considered. They were asked to indicate their level of interest in being involved in decision making activities associated with fifteen selected principalship-type duties.

Response choices were "very much," "some," "undecided," "prefer not," and "definitely would not." In some instances responses in the "very much" and "some" categories were combined to indicate willingness to be involved. The duties are listed in order of teacher interest:

Advising of policy development for effective student placement.

Participation in curriculum development

Consult and advise on the allocation of resources applicable to the site

Provide suggestions for the administration of the local budget

Select and plan professional development programming and inservice activities

Develop policies for promotion and implementation of the curriculum

Instructional organization and implementation of the curriculum

Recommending teacher placement/assigning duties

Recommend policies effecting class size

Recommend policies effecting teacher's schedule

Developing procedures for evaluation of teacher's lesson plans

Involvement in evaluation or instruction

Involvement of evaluation of building level administrator

Developing conferencing procedures with parents

Data were summarized in three categories: the responses of ALL teachers, the responses of ELEMENTARY teachers and the responses of SECONDARY teachers. Table I is a rank order listing of selected school-based management activites by teacher interest.

Table I

Level of Desired Activity of Teachers

(n=67)		very much	some	un-decided	prefer not	definitely not
Participate in the establishment of discipline processes and procedures	All	69%	31%			
	Elem	76%	24%			
	Sec	52%	48%			
Participation in curriculum development	All	69%	30%	1%		
	Elem	67%	33%			
	Sec	65%	30%	5%		
Instructional organization and implementation of the curriculum	All	63%	34%		3%	
	Elem	73%	27%			
	Sec	48%	43%		9%	
Developing parent conferencing procedures	All	57%	38%	1%	3%	1%
	Elem	76%	21%		3%	
	Sec	35%	53%	4%	4%	4%
Consult and advise on the allocation of resources applicable to the site	All	42%	52%	6%		
	Elem	39%	52%	9%		
	Sec	39%	57%	4%		
Developing policies effecting class size	All	61%	32%	3%	4%	
	Elem	64%	33%	3%		
	Sec	61%	26%		13%	
Involvement of evaluation of building administrator	All	54%	38%	4%	4%	
	Elem	55%	36%	3%	6%	
	Sec	57%	35%	4%	4%	
Recommend policies effecting teacher's schedules	All	67%	24%	1%	8%	
	Elem	67%	30%		3%	
	Sec	65%	13%	5%	17%	
Select and plan professional development programming/inservice activities	All	42%	49%	1%	6%	2%
	Elem	48%	46%	3%	3%	
	Sec	30%	52%		13%	5%

Table I (continued)		very much	some	un-decided	prefer not	definitely not
Develop policies for the promotion and retention of students	All	49%	37%	8%	6%	
	Elem	52%	36%	9%	3%	
	Sec	43%	35%	9%	13%	
Advising on policy development for effective student placement	All	46%	37%	12%	5%	
	Elem	48%	39%	6%	6%	
	Sec	39%	39%	17%	4%	
Involvement in evaluation of instruction	All	42%	42%	6%	9%	1%
	Elem	49%	45%		6%	
	Sec	22%	43%	13%	17%	4%
Provide suggestions for the administration of the local budget	All	43%	37%	12%	6%	2%
	Elem	45%	36%	9%	6%	4%
	Sec	39%	39%	13%	9%	
Developing procedures for evaluation of teacher's lesson plans	All	46%	34%	8%	10%	2%
	Elem	55%	36%	6%	3%	
	Sec	30%	30%	10%	26%	4%
Recommending teacher placement and assigning duties	All	28%	43%	10%	17%	2%
	Elem	39%	33%	12%	15%	
	Sec	13%	48%	13%	22%	4%

One hundred percent of the secondary and the elementary teachers wanted to be very much involved or somewhat involved in the establishment of discipline processes and procedures.

Sixty nine percent of the teachers were very much interested in partcipating in curriculum development and 30% stated some interest in doing so. Sixty seven percent of the elementary teachers and 65% of the secondary teachers wished to be very much involved.

Ninety seven percent of all teachers want to be very much or somewhat involved in instructional organization and implementation of the curriculum. Seventy three percent of the elementary teachers wish to be very much involved and 48% of the secondary teachers wish to be very much involved.

Fifty seven percent of all teachers wished to be very much involved with developing conferencing procedures with parents. Seventy six percent of elementary teachers wished to be very much involved while only 35% of secondary teachers wished this level of involvement.

When asked to what degree did teachers wish to be involved with consulting and advising on the allocation of resources applicable to the site, 42% of all teachers indicated they very much desired to be involved. Thirty nine percent of the elementary teachers and secondary teachers wished to be very much involved.

Ninety three percent of all teachers wished to be very much or somewhat involved in developing policies effecting class size. Sixty four percent of elementary teachers wished to be very much involved and 61% of secondary teachers wished to be very much involved.

Ninety one percent of all teachers stated they wished to be very much or involved in evaluation of the building level administrator. Fifty five percent of elementary teachers and 57% of secondary teachers wished to be very much involved in this activity. Eight percent of secondary teachers preferred no involvement or definitely no involvement.

Ninety one percent of all teachers wished to be very much or somewhat involved in recommending policies effecting teacher's schedules. Only 3 % of elementary teachers preferred not to be involved while 18% of secondary teachers preferred not to be involved.

Forty two percent of the teachers wished to be very much involved in the selection and planning of professional development programming and inservice activities. Elementary teachers indicated a stronger interest in being very much involved in this activity with 48% indicating so, while only 30% of secondary teachers indicated so.

Forty nine percent of all teachers wished to be very much involved in developing policies for promotion and retention of students. Eighty eight percent of elementary teachers wished to be somewhat or very much involved with developing these policies and 78% of the secondary teachers wished the same degree of involvement. Twenty two percent of the secondary teachers preferred not to be involved or were undecided, while only 12% of the elementary teachers preferred not to be involved or were undecided.

Forty six percent of all teachers wished to be very much involved in policy development for effective student placement. Thirty nine percent of the secondary teachers wished to be very much involved and 48% of the elementary teachers wished to be very much involved. Sixteen percent of the teachers were either undecided or preferred not to be involved.

Eighty four percent of all teachers indicated they very much wished to be involved with evaluation of instruction. Sixteen percent of all teachers preferred not to be involved with evaluation of instruction. Twenty two percent of secondary teachers either did not prefer to be involved or definitely would not be involved, while only 6% of elementary teachers preferred no involvement.

Forty three percent of the teachers wished to be very much involved with providing suggestions for the administration of the local budget. Thirty seven percent indicated they wished some involvement. Forty five percent of the elementary teachers wished to be very much involved and 39% of the secondary teachers wished to be very much involved.

Forty six percent of all teachers preferred to be very much involved in developing procedures for evaluation of teacher's lesson plans. Fifty five percent of the elementary teachers wished to be very much involved while only 30% of secondary teachers wished to be very much involved. Twenty six percent of secondary teachers preferred not to be involved and 4% indicated definitely no involvement.

Seventy one percent of all teachers indicated they either very much or somewhat wished to be involved with recommending teacher placement and assigning of duties. The percent of teachers wishing to be very much involved indicated a marked decrease in interest; 39% of elementary teachers and only 13% of secondary teachers. Twenty two percent of secondary teachers preferred to not be involved and 4% indicated definitely no involvement.

Evidence, from this study at least, clearly suggests that teachers in small schools do want to participate in decision making. They want to be involved. Activities attracting the highest level of interest in decision making participation relate to the teacher and the classroom. According to this study teachers want to be most involved in decisions that effect discipline, curriculum, parents, expenditures, and class size. They prefer less involvement in decisions addressing the selection and planning of professional development programming and inservice activities, policies effecting the teacher's schedule, procedures for evaluating lesson plans, evaluation of instruction, and teacher placement and duty assingments.

REFERENCES

Huddleston, J.; Claspell, M.; and Killion, J. "Participative Decision Making Can Capitalize on Teacher Expertise," NASSP Bulletin, April 1991: 81-89.

Marburger, C. L. One School at a Time. School-Based Management: A Process for Change. Columbia, Md. National Committee for Citizens in Education. (ERIC Reference No. ED 263 683), 1985.

Majkowski, C., and Fleming, D. School-Site Management: Concepts and Approaches. Cranston. Rhode Island Educational Leadership Academy. (ERIC Reference No. ED 307 668), 1988. ED1988.

Powell, N. "School-Based Management in Smaller Secondary Schools. NASSP Bulletin, March, 1991: 11-15.

Van Meter, Eddy J. "The Kentucky Mandate: School-Based Decision Making, NASSP Bulletin, February, 1991: 52-62.